

HOUSE BILL NO. 501

INTRODUCED BY D. GALLIK

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT REQUIRING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO CONDUCT A STUDY ON THE FEASIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING AN AGRI-BUSINESS CENTER IN MONTANA; PROVIDING FOR AN AGRI-BUSINESS CENTER STUDY COUNCIL; PROVIDING REPORTING REQUIREMENTS; PROVIDING AN APPROPRIATION; AND PROVIDING A TERMINATION DATE."

WHEREAS, Montana does not have an agri-business center that would provide added value to Montana agricultural products; and

WHEREAS, states in the Northwest and Northern Plains are aggressively recruiting agri-businesses through the establishment of agri-business centers or the establishment of agricultural incubators; and

WHEREAS, in order to compete with surrounding states, Montana needs to establish entities similar to those in neighboring states to remain competitive and to expand our agricultural base, thereby enhancing the opportunities in our agricultural rural areas.

THEREFORE, Montana needs to determine the feasibility of an agri-business center and determine what is necessary to remain competitive with neighboring states.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

NEW SECTION. Section 1. Feasibility study. The department of agriculture shall conduct a study of the feasibility of establishing an agri-business center in Montana. The study must address but is not limited to the following issues:

- (1) the type of structure that could be used for an agri-business center;
- (2) the funding that would be necessary and possible sources of funding;
- (3) the management needs of an agri-business center; and
- (4) possible locations for an agri-business center, with an emphasis placed on a location in rural Montana.

NEW SECTION. Section 2. Agri-business center study council. (1) There is an agri-business center

1 study council to assist the director of the department of agriculture in conducting the study provided for
2 in [section 1]. The council must be composed of the following members:

3 (a) the director of the department of agriculture;

4 (b) a legislator from each house of the legislature and from each party that is appointed as
5 provided in subsection (2); and

6 (c) 10 additional members appointed by the director of the department of agriculture that represent
7 an appropriate cross-section of Montana.

8 (2) The speaker of the house shall appoint a member of the democratic party, and the president
9 of the senate shall appoint a member of the republican party.

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11 NEW SECTION. **Section 3. Report.** The director of the department of agriculture shall report to
12 the 58th legislature on the recommendations of the agri-business center study council, with suggested
13 appropriate legislation to implement the recommendations.

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15 NEW SECTION. **Section 4. Appropriation.** There is appropriated \$95,000 from the general fund
16 to conduct the study provided for in [section 1]. \$60,000 must be used for contracted services, \$25,000
17 must be used for the expenses of the agri-business center study council, and \$10,000 must be used for
18 travel, printing, and miscellaneous costs.

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20 NEW SECTION. **Section 5. Termination.** [This act] terminates January 1, 2003.

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